



## State of New Hampshire Employee Wellness News

September  
2011

### Cholesterol: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By Lisa Marzoli, Anthem Wellness Coordinator

Have you had your cholesterol checked lately? Do you know your "numbers"? Do you know what they mean? What exactly is cholesterol? Since the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) issued its cholesterol guidelines in 2004, a number of studies have provided evidence that when it comes to LDL (bad) cholesterol and total cholesterol levels, the lower the better. This does not mean that the healthiest cholesterol level is zero.

Our bodies need cholesterol – it is essential for life. Both men and women would not be able to produce gender-specific hormones such as testosterone and estrogen in the absence of cholesterol. The intestines cannot digest food without cholesterol, and the body's cells cannot create their outside coating, or membrane. The body needs cholesterol to ensure proper function of the nervous system.

What is not good is having too much cholesterol, and carrying it in the bloodstream in particles that deposit it in the wrong places. Too much cholesterol in the blood has been linked to the formation of fatty plaques that can narrow arteries, including those that supply the heart muscle itself. This buildup of cholesterol in the arteries reduces blood flow, creating the risk of a heart attack or stroke. Most people's bodies already make more cholesterol than they need, so a diet that includes foods that are high in saturated fats and trans-fats boosts cholesterol levels significantly.

Depending on how cholesterol is transported in the blood, cholesterol can be "good" (HDL – think "H" for healthy) or "bad" (LDL – "L" for lousy). Cholesterol is carried in the blood in particles called "lipoproteins". These particles are made up of cholesterol on the inside and protein on the outside. Like a highway at rush hour, the blood stream carries varying types of fat-transporting particles, from small, dense ones (HDL – heavy) to light, fluffy ones (LDL). The higher the ratio of fat to protein, the lower the lipoprotein particle density, thus more fat means lower density.

Because LDL cholesterol is light, or less dense, it can easily attach to the lining of arteries and build up over time. HDL particles made by the liver and intestines contain lots of protein, but not much fat, making them heavier or more dense than LDLs. The HDL particles sponge up excess cholesterol from the linings of blood vessels and elsewhere and carry it off to the liver for disposal. **CONTINUED on page 6.....**

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**We're on the web!**  
Visit

**[Admin.state.nh.us/  
wellness](http://Admin.state.nh.us/wellness)**



### National Health Observances

#### Fruit and Veggies Month



#### Cholesterol Education Month



#### Prostate Cancer Awareness Month



#### Whole Grains Month



## September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 	2	3 
4 	5 	6	7	8 	9 	10 
11 	12	13	14 	15 	16	17 
18 	19	20	21	22 	23	24 
25 	26	27	27	29 	30	



The sneakers on the calendar represent walking/running events posted on

[coolrunning.com](http://coolrunning.com)

For other local events, check out

[visithn.gov](http://visithn.gov)

[healnh.org](http://healnh.org)

## Wellness Coordinator Corner

**SAVE THE DATE**—The next quarterly Wellness Coordinator Training Session will occur on October 13th at the Local Government Center. The state wellness team is in the process of developing an agenda and will send it out with the list of topics by mid-September.

**Understanding Your Health Workshops**—The state wellness team has visited six worksites around the state so far and has nearly 20 more sites to visit before the end of the year. This workshop reviews the problem of increasing health care costs and introduces the concepts of medical consumerism and medical self-care. Tips to cost containment strategies are discussed to assist employees and family members. If you would like to schedule this workshop at any of your worksites, please contact Mike Loomis at 271-4103.

**Agency Wellness Spotlight**—The *Department of Health and Human Services* is taking steps to formulate an employee wellness plan. The DHHS Wellness team collaboratively completed the Wellness Councils of America 100 questions checklist that assesses where the agency stands in delivering a results-driven agency wellness initiative. Leadership support is strong in this team with Deputy Commissioner Mary Ann Cooney co-chairing and leading the group into developing an Operating Plan.

*New Hampshire Employment Security* will be hosting a "Stress-Less in the Workplace" workshop presented by Lisa Marzoli, Anthem Wellness Coordinator at their main office building in Concord.



## Worksite Wellness Resources

### Anthem

**NEW WORKSHOP!!! It's Never Too Late: Healthy Aging at Any Age**—It's inevitable, we all begin aging from the moment we are born. However, poor health is not inevitable as we age. As millions of baby boomers approach middle age, concerns abound as to how this shift will affect our healthcare system. A healthy middle and old age cannot be taken for granted. Many illnesses and disabilities that frequently accompany an aging population can often be delayed until very late in life. Since genes account for only about one third of the problems associated with aging, lifestyle factors have an even greater impact on health during middle and late life than in early adulthood. In this presentation learn potential ways to decrease the cost of living longer and reduce healthcare costs overall; the physiological changes and challenges of aging; lifestyle characteristics of the oldest and healthiest people in the world; and most importantly, tips for a healthier life including disease prevention recommendations.

**To schedule this workshop, have your agency Human Resource or Wellness Coordinator contact Lisa Marzoli at 603-695-7559 or e-mail [lisa.marzoli@anthem.com](mailto:lisa.marzoli@anthem.com)**

### Local Government Center

**Nutrition 101**—This workshop covers the basics of nutrition and provides helpful tools and tips for incorporating proper nutrition into our daily lives. Topics covered include how to tell the difference between "good" and "bad" fat, healthy snacking, reading food labels, and how to select lean meats.

**To schedule this workshop, have your agency Human Resource or Wellness Coordinator contact Bill Byron at 800-852-3358 ext: 208 or e-mail [wbyron@nhlgc.org](mailto:wbyron@nhlgc.org)**

### Employee Assistance Program

**The Power of Positive Thinking**—Your basic outlook on life, whether pessimistic or optimistic, is learned in infancy and early childhood. Because it is learned at such an early age, you may believe that attitude can't really change. While it takes practice and the willingness to take a long, hard look at yourself, you can cultivate a more optimistic outlook of the world and a more positive viewpoint of yourself and your actions. In the modern world, there are more benefits to a viewpoint, which includes a greater amount of optimism. These include: better overall health, more rapid recovery from injury or illness and fewer stress or depression-related problems to name a few.

**To schedule this workshop, have your agency Human Resource or Wellness Coordinator contact EAP at 603-271-4336**

**DID YOU KNOW!**  
State wellness partners including Anthem, Local Government Center and the Employee Assistance Program provide worksite workshops covering over 40 health and safety topics







## 2011 Worksite Flu Clinics

Once again, the State will be offering seasonal flu clinics for State of New Hampshire (SoNH) employees. Anthem BCBS will be coordinating the clinics with Home Healthcare, Hospice & Community Services (HCS) and Agency HR to administer the seasonal flu vaccines between September and November. All state employees who are covered by the SoNH Anthem plan are eligible to participate. In addition, State employees (both full-time and part-time) who are not covered by the SoNH Anthem plan will also be eligible to participate. HCS is capable of billing other Anthem plans, Harvard Pilgrim, and Medicare. If an employee is not covered under any of these plans, and still wants to participate, they can self-pay the \$25 fee with cash or check payable to HCS.

## Office Ergonomic Principles

Workstation ergonomics are among the seven individual behaviors that the Wellness Councils of America recommend worksite wellness programs concentrate on making improvements to create supportive, health-promoting environments. Poor ergonomics can cause discomfort and pain in individuals, making other tasks or leisure activity difficult to do. Ergonomics is the study of human work. Modern office workers face injury risks such as lower back pain. This is one of the most common work-related injuries and is often caused by ordinary work activities such as sitting in an office chair or heavy lifting. Applying ergonomic principles - the study of the workplace as it relates to the worker - can help prevent work-related back pain and back injury and help maintain a healthy back. Here are a few tips to make your office area more ergonomic:

- Arrange your workstation so that frequently used items are within reach. Items should be placed so that overhead reaching and torso twisting is minimized.
- Become familiar with the adjustment mechanisms of your chair. Make sure your feet are supported by a flat surface to alleviate lower back strain. A sturdy cardboard box can be used as footrest if the chair must be set at a high setting for the desk.
- The monitor should be positioned directly in front of you. The monitor screen should be at eyeball height; lower if you wear bifocal, trifocals or progressive-style lenses.

Ergonomics was a focus at the July, 2011 Wellness Coordinator Training Session and resources including a presentation, self-assessment and top ten ergonomic musts were handed out. For a copy of these resources, visit [admin.state.nh.us/wellness/Wellness\\_Coordinators.html](http://admin.state.nh.us/wellness/Wellness_Coordinators.html).

If you would like an ergonomic evaluation done on your workstation, please contact Diane Caldon, Administrative Assistant or Rebecca White, Risk Manager in Risk Management at 271-3180 and they will help arrange it.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses**

**To learn more about the flu, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)**



## Wellness Program Update

**Healthy Eating Active Living New Hampshire (HEAL NH)**—Recently, Terry Johnson, Director of HEAL NH contacted the State Wellness Program and announced that the program would be featured in a HEAL NH series that follows several organizations in New Hampshire, their progress, challenges and successes as they implement workplace wellness programs. The article "Implementing a Worksite Wellness Program: Best Practices From New Hampshire's Largest Employer" will be featured in New Hampshire Business Review later this year.

**National Diabetes Education Program Recognition**—The State Wellness Program was spotlighted in August on the National Diabetes Education Program website for our work in collaboration with DHHS Diabetes Education Program during last November's "Reduce Your Risk" diabetes prevention campaign.

As of August 1st,  
5,708 State  
Health Benefit  
Program  
Members have  
completed their  
Health  
Assessment Tool  
(HAT)

Members can  
complete their  
HAT or any of  
the six Better  
Health Digital  
Health  
Coaching  
Programs  
throughout the  
year

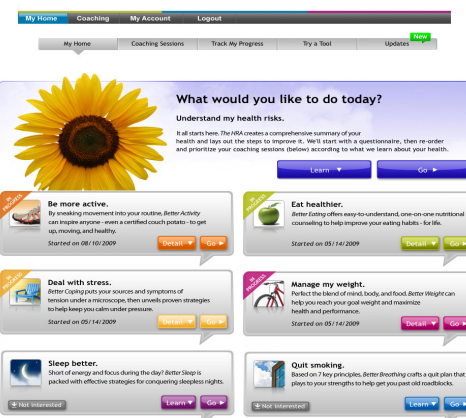


## State Health Benefit Program Spotlight

**Nutrition Counseling Benefit**—With September being "Fruit and Veggies—More Matters Month" and "Whole Grains Month", this is a perfect time to highlight resources for nutrition counseling. With ample resources at our finger tips to research and learn about nutrition via websites, digital health coaching, or weight management classes, it would seem we have everything we need to eat healthier. But for many, nutrition counseling works best in a face to face setting. Did you know that nutritional counseling is covered by the State Health Benefit Program? Registered Dietitians offer reliable information about healthy eating, diet plans and meal preparation. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a nutritionist's key role is providing patients with counseling and guidance on good nutrition and healthy eating habits. For nutrition counseling coverage information, contact Anthem Member Services at 800-933-8415.

**Better Health, Better Sleep Coaching**—Making healthy lifestyle choices day after day can be challenging. Sometimes all it takes is a little coaching and support to help you along. That is why we're excited to introduce a new program designed to help you reach better health. Short of energy and focus during the day? *Better Sleep* is packed with effective strategies for conquering sleepless nights.

To move toward a healthier you, start by logging on to [anthem.com](http://anthem.com) and take the Better Health Assessment Tool. It will give you a complete overview of your health and the opportunity for free health coaching sessions including *Better Sleep*. For instructions or frequently asked questions, visit [admin.state.nh.us/hr/flexible\\_spending.html](http://admin.state.nh.us/hr/flexible_spending.html).





## Cholesterol Continued

If you think of the LDL that builds up inside blood vessels as blood garbage, then HDL is like a garbage collector that picks up fatty materials from blood vessel walls and delivers them to the liver for removal. There are a number of lifestyle changes that can be made to affect cholesterol levels:

**Nutrition**—Certain foods have types of fat that raise cholesterol levels. These types of fats include saturated fat, trans-fatty acids or trans fats, and dietary cholesterol. Saturated fats come largely from animal fat in the diet, but also some vegetable oils such as palm oil. Trans-fats are created when vegetable oil is hydrogenated, which hardens it. Research suggests that trans-fatty acids can raise cholesterol levels. Dietary cholesterol is found in foods that come from animal sources such as egg yolks, meat and dairy products.

**Weight**—Being overweight tends to increase LDL levels, lowers HDL levels, and increases total cholesterol. Even a 10% decrease in weight has a significant impact on cholesterol levels.

**Physical Activity**—Some studies suggest that exercise has the most impact on increasing HDL levels, next to quitting smoking. Additionally, lack of physical activity can lead to weight gain, which can contribute to higher LDL cholesterol levels.

**If you Smoke, QUIT**—Being a non-smoker can help raise your HDL and has additional health benefits, such as reducing your risk for cancer.

Unfortunately, two factors can not be changed:

**Age and Gender**—As women and men get older, their cholesterol levels rise. Before the age of menopause, women generally have lower total cholesterol levels than men of the same age. After the age of menopause, women's LDL levels tend to rise.

**Heredity**—Your genetics partly determine how much cholesterol your body makes.

Having high cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. The good news is that cholesterol can be managed and there are ways to help control it. Since HDL cholesterol protects against heart disease, higher numbers are better. Making fruits and vegetables a regular part of every meal and snack is an easy way to improve heart health. Healthy daily nutrition habits can go a long way in the battle against heart disease at any age.

### References:

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep/ncep\\_pd.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep/ncep_pd.htm)  
[www.cdc.gov/cholesterol](http://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol)

**Desirable  
Cholesterol  
Levels (CDC)**

**Total  
Less than  
200 mg/dL**

**LDL  
Less than  
100 mg/dL**

**HDL  
60 mg/dL or  
higher**

**Triglycerides  
Less than  
150 mg/dL**